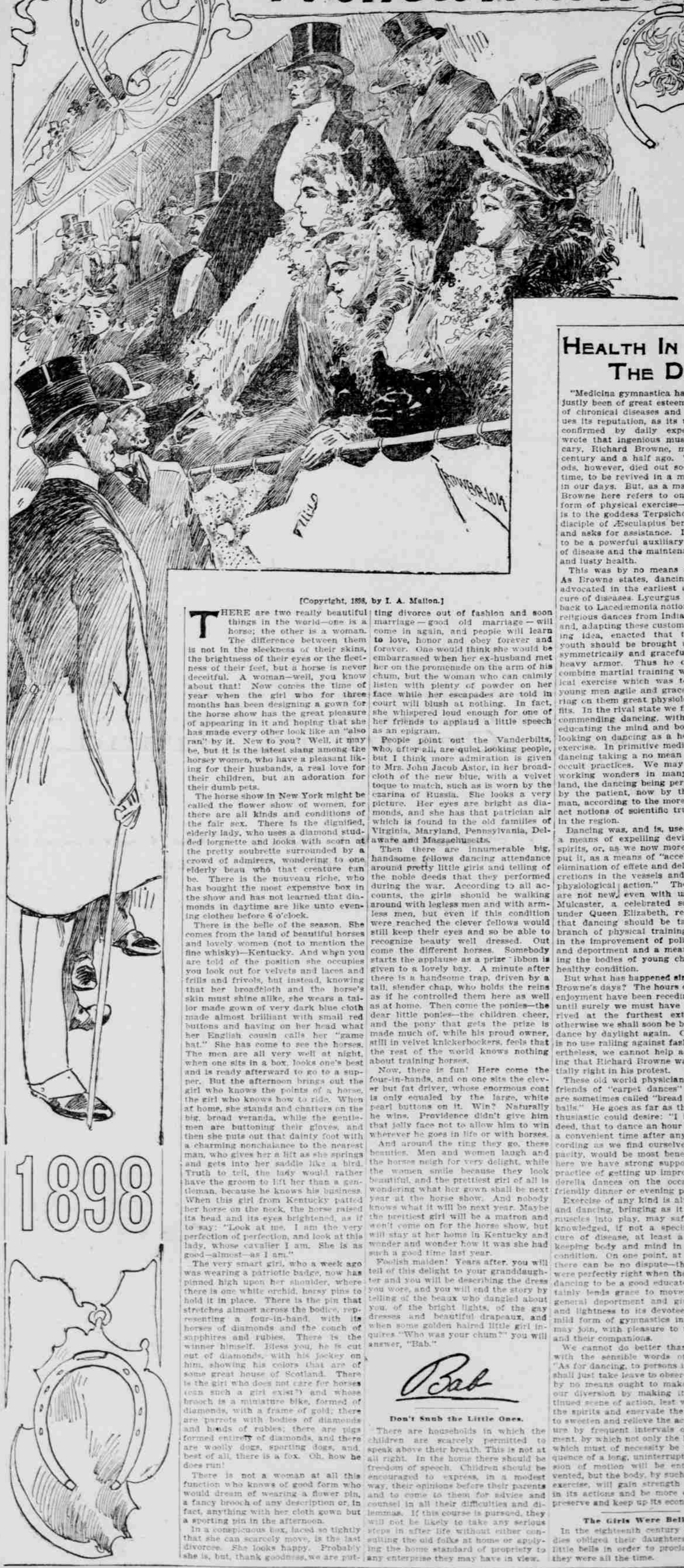
Woman and the House



1898

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THERE are two really beautiful things in the world—one is a horse; the other is a woman. The difference between them is not in the sleekness of their skins, the brightness of their eyes or the fleetness of their feet, but a horse is never deceitful. A woman—well, you know about that! Now comes the time of year when the girl who for three months has been designing a gown for the horse show has the great pleasure of appearing in it and hoping that she has made every other look like an "also ran" by it. New to you? Well, it may be, but it is the latest slang among the horsey women, who have a pleasant liking for their husbands, a real love for their children, but an adoration for their dumb pets.

The horse show in New York might be called the flower show of women, for there are all kinds and conditions of the fair sex. There is the dignified, elderly lady, who uses a diamond studded lorgnette and looks with scorn at the pretty soubrette surrounded by a crowd of admirers, wondering to one elderly beau who that creature can be. There is the nouveau riche, who has bought the most expensive box in the show and has not learned that diamonds in daytime are like unto evening clothes before 6 o'clock.

There is the belle of the season. She comes from the land of beautiful horses and lovely women (not to mention the fine whisky)—Kentucky. And when you are told of the position she occupies you look out for velvets and laces and frills and frivols, but instead, knowing that her broadcloth and the horse's skin must shine alike, she wears a tailor made gown of very dark blue cloth made almost brilliant with small red buttons and having on her head what her English cousin calls her "game hat." She has come to see the horses. The men are all very well at night, when one sits in a box, looks one's best and is ready afterward to go to a supper. But the afternoon brings out the girl who knows the points of a horse, the girl who knows how to ride. When at home, she stands and chatters on the big, broad veranda, while the gentlemen are buttoning their gloves, and then she puts out that dainty foot with a charming nonchalance to the nearest man, who gives her a lift as she springs and gets into her saddle like a bird. Truth to tell, the lady would rather have the groom to lift her than a gentleman, because he knows his business. When this girl from Kentucky patted her horse on the neck, the horse raised its head and its eyes brightened, as if to say: "Look at me. I am the very perfection of perfection, and look at this lady, whose cavalier I am. She is as good—almost—as I am."

The very smart girl, who a week ago was wearing a patriotic badge, now has pinned high upon her shoulder, where there is one white orchid, horsy pins to hold it in place. There is the pin that stretches almost across the bodice, representing a four-in-hand, with its horses of diamonds and the couch of sapphires and rubies. There is the winner himself. Bless you, he is cut out of diamonds, with his jockey on him, showing his colors that are of some great house of Scotland. There is the girl who does not care for horses (can such a girl exist?) and whose brooch is a miniature bike, formed of diamonds, with a frame of gold; there are parrots with bodies of diamonds and heads of rubies; there are pigs formed entirely of diamonds, and there are woolly dogs, sporting dogs, and, best of all, there is a fox. Oh, how he does run!

There is not a woman at all this function who knows of good form who would dream of wearing a flower pin, a fancy brooch of any description or, in fact, anything with her cloth gown but a sporting pin in the afternoon.

In a conspicuous box, laced so tightly that she can scarcely move, is the last divorcee. She looks happy. Probably she is, but, thank goodness, we are putting divorce out of fashion and soon marriage—good old marriage—will come in again, and people will learn to love, honor and obey forever and forever. One would think she would be embarrassed when her ex-husband met her on the promenade on the arm of his chum, but the woman who can calmly listen with plenty of powder on her face while her escapades are told in court will blush at nothing. In fact, she whispered loud enough for one of her friends to applaud a little speech as an epigram.

People point out the Vanderbilts, who, after all, are quiet looking people, but I think more admiration is given to Mrs. John Jacob Astor, in her broadcloth of the new blue, with a velvet toque to match, such as is worn by the czarina of Russia. She looks a very picture. Her eyes are bright as diamonds, and she has that patrician air which is found in the old families of Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Massachusetts.

Then there are innumerable big, handsome fellows dancing attendance around pretty little girls and telling of the noble deeds that they performed during the war. According to all accounts, the girls should be walking around with legless men and with armless men, but even if this condition were reached the clever fellows would still keep their eyes and so be able to recognise beauty well dressed. Out come the different horses. Somebody starts the applause as a prize ribbon is given to a lovely bay. A minute after there is a handsome trap, driven by a tall, slender chap, who holds the reins as if he controlled them here as well as at home. Then come the ponies—the dear little ponies—the children cheer, and the pony that gets the prize is made much of, while his proud owner, still in velvet knickerbockers, feels that the rest of the world knows nothing about training horses.

Now, there is fun! Here come the four-in-hands, and on one sits the clever but fat driver, whose enormous coat is only equaled by the large, white pearl buttons on it. Win? Naturally he wins. Providence didn't give him that jolly face not to allow him to win wherever he goes in life or with horses.

And around the ring they go, these beauties. Men and women laugh and the horses neigh for very delight, while the women smile because they look beautiful, and the prettiest girl of all is wondering what her gown shall be next year at the horse show. And nobody knows what it will be next year. Maybe the prettiest girl will be a matron and won't come on for the horse show, but will stay at her home in Kentucky and wonder and wonder how it was she had such a good time last year.

Foolish maiden! Years after, you will tell of this delight to your granddaughter and you will be describing the dress you wore, and you will end the story by telling of the beaux who dangled about you, of the bright lights, of the gay dresses and beautiful drapeaux, and when some golden haired little girl inquires "Who was your chum?" you will answer, "Bab."

Bab

Don't Snub the Little Ones.

There are households in which the children are scarcely permitted to speak above their breath. This is not at all right. In the home there should be freedom of speech. Children should be encouraged to express, in a modest way, their opinions before their parents and to come to them for advice and counsel in all their difficulties and dilemmas. If this course is pursued, they will not be likely to take any serious steps in after life without either consulting the old folks at home or applying the home standard of propriety to any enterprise they may have in view.

Health In The Dance.

"Medicina gymnastica has in all ages justly been of great esteem in the cure of chronical diseases and still continues its reputation, as its usefulness is confirmed by daily experience." So wrote that ingenious musical apothecary, Richard Browne, more than a century and a half ago. These methods, however, died out soon after his time, to be revived in a modified form in our days. But, as a matter of fact, Browne here refers to one particular form of physical exercise—dancing. It is to the goddess Terpsichore that this disciple of Æsculapius bends his knee and asks for assistance. Dancing was to be a powerful auxiliary in the cure of disease and the maintenance of good and lusty health.

This was by no means a new idea. As Browne states, dancing had been advocated in the earliest ages for the cure of diseases. Lycurgus had brought back to Lacedæmonia notions of medico religious dances from India and Egypt, and, adapting these customs to his ruling idea, enacted that the Spartan youth should be brought up to dance symmetrically and gracefully, even in heavy armor. Thus he contrived to combine martial training with a physical exercise which was to make the young men agile and graceful, conferring on them great physiological benefits. In the rival state we find Socrates commending dancing, with a view to educating the mind and body; he, too, looking on dancing as a health giving exercise. In primitive medicine we find dancing taking a no mean part in the occult practices. We may still see it working wonders in many a savage land, the dancing being performed now by the patient, now by the medicine man, according to the more or less exact notions of scientific truth existing in the region.

Dancing was, and is, used chiefly as a means of expelling devils and evil spirits, or, as we now more accurately put it, as a means of "accelerating the elimination of effete and deleterious secretions in the vessels and tissues by physiological action." These notions are not new, even with us. Richard Mulcaster, a celebrated schoolmaster under Queen Elizabeth, recommended that dancing should be taught as a branch of physical training, resulting in the improvement of polite carriage and deportment and a means of keeping the bodies of young children in a healthy condition.

But what has happened since Richard Browne's days? The hours of saltatory enjoyment have been receding steadily, until surely we must have at last arrived at the furthest extremity, or otherwise we shall soon be beginning to dance by daylight again. Of course it is no use railing against fashion. Nevertheless, we cannot help acknowledging that Richard Browne was substantially right in his protest.

These old world physicians were the friends of "carpet dances" and what are sometimes called "bread and butter balls." He goes as far as the most enthusiastic could desire: "I believe, indeed, that to dance an hour or more at a convenient time after any meal, according as we find ourselves in a capacity, would be most beneficial." So here we have strong support for our practice of getting up impromptu Cinderella dances on the occasion of a friendly dinner or evening party.

Exercise of any kind is always good, and dancing, bringing as it does most muscles into play, may safely be acknowledged, if not a specific for the cure of disease, at least a means of keeping body and mind in a healthy condition. On one point, at all events, there can be no dispute—the ancients were perfectly right when they declared dancing to be a good educator. It certainly lends grace to movements and general deportment and gives agility and lightness to its devotees. It is a mild form of gymnastics in which all may join, with pleasure to themselves and their companions.

We cannot do better than conclude with the sensible words of Browne: "As for dancing, to persons in health, I shall just take leave to observe that we by no means ought to make a toil of our diversion by making it one continued scene of action, lest we exhaust the spirits and enervate the body, but to sweeten and relieve the active pleasure by frequent intervals of refreshment, by which not only the bad effects which must of necessity be the consequence of a long, uninterrupted succession of motion will be entirely prevented, but the body, by such agreeable exercise, will gain strength and vigor in its actions and be more enabled to preserve and keep up its economy."

The Girls Were Belled.

In the eighteenth century Polish ladies obliged their daughters to wear little bells in order to proclaim where they were all the time.

Queer Wooings In Switzerland.

There are very few early marriages among the Swiss. They are, almost to a couple, dependent, not upon wages, but upon land, and it is not he who can work who can afford to marry, but he who owns enough land to produce the necessities of family life. The Swiss are hardy. All the conditions of their existence make them so. The hardest and most ceaseless work is their necessary lot, and that work, as a rule, yields them but the merest sufficiencies. Their summers are summers of cruel labor and their harvests harvests of only just enough sheaves of corn, bins of apples, heaps of cheese, stores of honey, bundles of flax, hemp and wool to insure their bitter winters from nakedness and hunger. They must work, and they must think ahead. They must hoard through all the lavish, luscious summer, or winter will bring them to abject want, want which their neighbors will certainly lack the means and possibly lack the will to relieve.

They have no leisure. They have no time, perhaps no heart, for lovemaking. Their lovemaking before marriage is neither very moving nor very admirable, but the lovemaking that precedes marriages is the least of lovemaking, the chill tremble of light before the full glory of life's day. In Switzerland there is no lovemaking after marriage.

There is something very sad and dreary about a wedding in the canton of Valais. There is no sign of rejoicing, no music, no feasting, not even a day's cessation from the extremely hard work which makes up the daily life—the life of each and every day in this, the hardest, narrowest pulsed of all the Swiss cantons. At daylight, or rather just before daylight, at day dawn, the bride and groom and the few necessary witnesses walk soberly—gloomily it always seems—to church. There is no marriage garment, no flutter of bridal ribbon, no perfumed flush of bridal flowers. All wear their workaday clothes.

The ceremony is briefly—almost sullenly—performed. There are no congratulations. Resignation seems the warmest emotion felt—certainly it is the warmest expressed—and it is not expressed warmly. There is not even a nuptial kiss. The bride is not shy. The bridegroom is not exultant. All seem sullen, all depressed. The priest is paid his scanty fee—the scantiest possible. The depressing, the dreary, the deadly dull function is over. The day has fairly broken now, and all turn away and plod sullenly to their customary back breaking daily toil.

There is no lingering in the church porch for the newly made wife nor for her bridegroom. They must get to their daily work, and get there at once; no delaying work for one five minutes for peasants of Canton Valais. Perhaps both bride and groom feel a little less like work than is their industrious wont, for both have been up even a little earlier than is their habit. They must part sharply now and each off to work. They will meet later at their frugal 11 o'clock dinner of apple brandy and pulse soup.

Perhaps there are fewer love marriages among the peasants of Valais than in any other part of Europe. Only one brother or one sister of each family is allowed to marry, that the scant family patrimony may never be diminished. A family council, after grave and long cold blooded consideration, decides which brother or sister shall wed—perpetuate the blood, and hand down the meager wealth. For more than one to wed, for inclination to come flouncing in and take risks, would be improvident, and there is no improvidence in Canton Valais.

They even gamble as they wed and woo, these dumb, numb Swiss stoics—that is, without expense and when they have nothing better (i. e., more financially profitable) to do. They are as prudent—oh, so prudent!—in their gamings as in their marryings. Card playing is both an amusement and an occupation of their dull winters, chiefly so perhaps at Zermatt, but to no small extent all over the republic. They do not play for money, nor for tangible goods or chattels. That would be most unSwiss. They play for prayers. The day after the play all the losers must go to their village church and pray earnestly for the souls of those who have won. Ah, there is a humorous side to life as we queer humans live it, even in Switzerland!

Wedding gifts are few and far between in Switzerland, it almost goes without saying. But in about half the cantons the bridegroom is expected to bestow largess to the extravagant extent of one pair of new shoes. In some cantons it is the chief bridesmaid who is overwhelmed with this great bounty, in others it is the groomsman who is so enriched. And bridegrooms have been known to give two pairs of shoes—one to the attendant maiden, one to the groomsman. In those cantons where marriages are not unattended by function and merrymaking each guest usually receives a handkerchief. Red, the oriental bridal red, is usually their color. Bride or groom provides the stuff, and the bride's girl friends sew them.

The bride's wedding dress—if she have one, which happens about one time in three—is a somber garment. The Swiss make but little use of color, especially the women. The men sometimes paint their houses gayly. The women are rarely gayly dressed, except in the colored photographs which are sold to travelers. Swiss women, old and young, almost invariably in selecting garments choose first those that will wear well, and secondly those that will least frequently require washing. In many of the cantons the peasantry have a household wash once a year, and once a year only.

The frugal housewife has a goodly, if coarse, store of linen and such. When sheets and napery and undervests, etc., cannot be any longer used unwashed, they are thrown into a big attic, which always tops the dwelling house or the barn. Once a year, in the busy summer time usually, the contents of this soiled linen garner room is exhumed, thrown out of the window, and all the women of the household fall to washing.

The brides of Grisons wear gowns of black and are crowned with wreaths of orange flowers, wreaths from which long trails of the blossoms must hang below the bride's girdle at least. The guests, too, wear black, all those at least who wish or can afford to pay the bride great honor. Black is an extravagance, because it so soon shows soil and rust and dust; hence, to wear it is to pay the greatest compliment one Swiss can pay another. When a Swiss is extravagant in your honor—well, flattery can no further go.

In some cantons the driving of the dowry cart from the bride's old house to her new is an important and consequential function, as it or some analogous custom is in so many, many parts of the world.

A. N.

A Delightful Remedy For Worry.

A famous actress once said, "Worry is the foe to all beauty," and she might have added, "It is also the foe to all health." Nothing will bring lines and wrinkles so soon to a face as worry. There are people who worry over a thing for years. It may be something they wish they had not done, or it may be something that they long to do. The thought of it is with them the moment they open their eyes in the morning, and it is the last thing they think of before falling to sleep. It may even happen that they dream of it, and very, very often it will keep them awake for hours.

Now, what is the good of it? Will worrying remedy what is past, or will it bring the future one day nearer? Is any good to be obtained by it at all? No, it is not, and you know it is not. "But," you say, "the thing is on my mind, and I can't get rid of it however I try." It can be done, though, if you try really hard enough. Here is one remedy, and you must say it is a pleasant one. The instant the worry takes possession of you think of some pleasure you have had at one time of your life. The worry will try and poke its way in between, but you must take a firm hold of it and put it out. Recall one pleasure after another, and as it brings a smile to your lips and a light to your eyes your face will slowly but surely assume a different and very much more pleasant expression.

Get into the habit of pondering over the pleasant things which happen to you each day and forget all the nasty ones. It is related of an old lady once who kept what she called "a pleasure book," and in it she made a point of recording each day some pleasure she had had. "No matter how dull or tiresome the day has been," she said, "I can always manage to find something to put in my book." Could you possibly find a better way to forget your troubles than by making a note of all your pleasures? We are always better for having been happy, and recalling a happiness that is over gives one a taste of it once more.

China's Superfluous Girls.

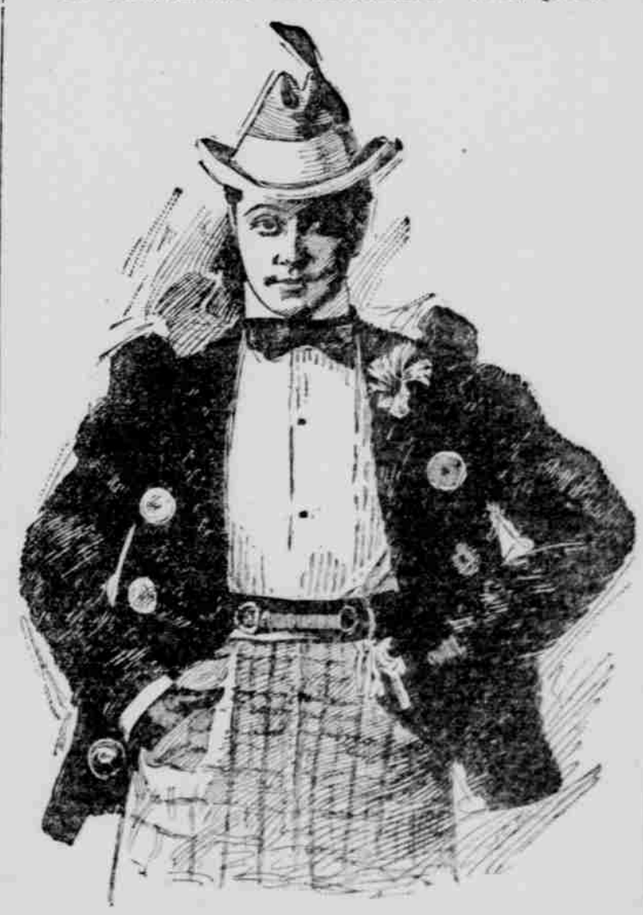
Consul S. L. Gracey of Fuchau, China, went last summer on an official visit in the interior. While at Kusheng he looked into some of the missionary operations, and in a letter he wrote:

"We attended several Sunday services, of large congregations and very interesting exercises. At Miss Hartford's woman's school I spoke to about 70 of her women, who are preparing for Bible work. All were married, although many of them were between the ages of 13 and 17, and very many of these had their babes with them. At the English mission I saw a very interesting sight. We were taken into a large room, and while standing there 50 little girls came in at different doors, and all came toddling up to us and chinchinned and tried to say 'Binguing,' which is a Christian salutation, meaning 'Peace be with you.' Many of them were under 2 years old, and none of them over 5. Every one of them had been picked out of the river or vats or tubs of water, in which they were being drowned by their fathers and mothers, as so many superfluous kittens might be drowned in the United States. It made us very sad as well as very glad—glad that so many precious little waifs had been rescued, but very sad when we thought of the thousands who are every year disposed of by cruel parents, simply because there is no room for another girl baby in the family circle."

How to Give Medicine to Children.

Children are naturally nervous and easily apprehensive, therefore all excitement should be avoided when it is necessary to give them medicine. Preparations for dressing a wound or the mixing of a drug should be made out of sight. Remember that a child cannot swallow as long as the spoon is between the teeth, and it is advisable to depress the tongue for a moment, then withdraw the spoon at once. A slight compression of the nose also helps swallowing.

A Shrewd Business Woman.



Miss Johnstone Bennett enjoys the proud distinction of being the only woman in America who has conducted a men's furnishing goods store and her own starring tour at one and the same time. But Miss Bennett is one of the keenest women in America, and when she found a short time ago that her lesser interest, the haberdashery in New York, was interfering with her more important one, the starring tour, she promptly abandoned the former, although it was said to be paying handsomely at the time. Miss Bennett's business acumen was never better illustrated than when she opened her store, except perhaps when she abandoned it. She had long been written up in the newspapers because of her mannish attire and exquisite taste in neckwear of the masculine type which she affected, and her incursion into the walks of trade was made with the intention of taking full advantage of the enormous amount of free advertising which her eccentricity in dress had brought. She knew when to start the haberdashery; that was bright. She knew when to close it; that was much brighter.

Women of Note.

Mrs. Gladstone owns three acres of land at Niagara Falls worth $5,000.

Miss Marie McNaughton and Miss Sarah Atkinson accompanied the United States peace commission as stenographers and typewriters. Miss Atkinson acquired her knowledge of Spanish through a residence in South America, where she was connected with the normal schools. After her return she engaged in translating for D. Appleton & Co., devoting her attention chiefly to textbooks. Miss McNaughton is skilled in the French language.

Mrs. Gaston Boyd of Newton, Kan., is the successful competitor in a recent contest in musical composition. Music was desired for a new poem, entitled "Old Glory." Many musicians of note entered a contest to see which could evolve the best composition. The selections were left to a committee of acknowledged musicians, which decided that Mrs. Boyd had written the best, and upon their decision Mr. Eugene F. Ware, the author, accepted it as the authorized music.

Adelaide Ristori, notwithstanding her age and infirmity, recently made a trip to Turin, where she recited the fifth canto of Dante's "Inferno" at the Carignano theater. Though her voice was weak, the dramatic genius which made her world famous still animated her delivery and elicited great applause.

The Duchess of Marlborough and the Duchess of Devonshire probably have the finest pearls in England, the Marlborough necklace being very well known. Many smart ladies wear their pearls constantly, although they are not seen, as they are worn under a high dress, as pearls are supposed to keep their color better when worn next to the skin. Pearls have within the past 25 years increased in value 1,000 per cent.

Mrs. Elizabeth S. Newcomb, who died recently at her home in Malden, Mass., was in many respects a remarkable woman. She was one of the few women that mastered the intricacies of navigation and was able to navigate one of the old time clipper ships across the ocean when her husband was too ill to do so himself. She made a great many voyages with him, he being one of the old line of sea captains that have passed away with the advent of ocean steamers. With him she crossed the Atlantic 44 times and saw a great part of the world. Her oldest son, Lieutenant Frank H. Newcomb of the United States revenue cutter service, was the hero of the battle of Cardenas on May 11 last. He was in command of the Hudson, which towed the gunboat Winslow out of the range of the deadly fire of the Spanish batteries, for which signal act of bravery he has received the thanks of congress and a special gold medal of honor.

Mrs. Hannah Clark has given to Elkhart, Ind., the Clark Homeopathic Hospital and Training School For Surgeons and Nurses. The building is modernly equipped and valued at $15,000.

Mrs. Richard King of Texas is probably the richest woman in the United States, not excepting Mrs. Hetty Green. Her wealth is partly inherited from her father, a pioneer Presbyterian clergyman, the first who ever went, staff and Bible in hand, to preach the gospel to the Indians and mixed races that peopled the vast domain over which his own little daughter was destined to hold sway as a landed proprietor. Mrs. King is a widow, and her landed estates in southern Texas amount to 1,250,000 acres, or about 1,906 square miles.

The queen of England has had a beaded plaid leveled at her royal person no fewer than five times. She has mercifully escaped from death nine times.

Mrs. J. T. Grissom, secretary of the Woman's Foreign Missionary society, will shortly bring out a new book.